

## What does this mean for my baby in the future?

An unidentified hemoglobin trait will not affect your baby's health. When your child grows up, his or her partner should be offered hemoglobin testing before they have children.

## What does this mean for my future children?

Having a child with an unidentified hemoglobin trait tells you that one parent (either mother OR father) has one unusual gene. Hemoglobin testing will tell you if you both have an unusual hemoglobin gene and if you are at risk to have a baby with a hemoglobin disease.



More information about genetics is available. Please ask your doctor about genetic counseling.

## Where can I get more information on unidentified hemoglobin traits and hemoglobin diseases?

Your baby's medical home (doctor) has been notified of these test results. You might want to talk to your doctor in more detail. For more information on unidentified hemoglobin traits and hemoglobin diseases you can call the Utah Department of Health at (801) 584-8256.

## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO



## UNIDENTIFIED HEMOGLOBIN TRAIT



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<http://health.utah.gov/newbornscreening>

You have just learned that your child has an unidentified hemoglobin trait. Naturally you are concerned and have many questions.

This brochure was designed to help answer some of your questions. It should not take the place of an informed discussion with your medical home (doctor).

### Is my baby sick?

No. An unidentified hemoglobin trait is not an illness. It will not make your baby sick.

### What is hemoglobin?

Hemoglobin is inside red blood cells and carries oxygen to all parts of the body. It also gives the red blood cell its color. There are many different types of hemoglobin.

### Why can't my baby's hemoglobin type be identified?

There are many different types of unusual hemoglobin. Most types don't cause any problems. Only some of the hemoglobin types have been identified and named.

### What are some types of hemoglobin?

The most common type of hemoglobin is hemoglobin A. It is also called normal or adult hemoglobin. Babies also have a type called hemoglobin F, or fetal hemoglobin, which disappears after awhile. Abnormal hemoglobin types, sometimes called variants, can affect how the hemoglobin functions in the body. Your genes determine the type of hemoglobin you have.

### What exactly is a gene?

Genes are tiny bits of information. They form the blueprint for new life. Genes come in pairs. You get half of your genes from your father and half of your genes from your mother.

### How did my baby get an unidentified hemoglobin trait?

Hemoglobin type, like hair color and height, is passed down in the family through genes. A variant, or abnormal, hemoglobin type occurs when a baby gets one normal hemoglobin from one parent, and one variant (abnormal) hemoglobin from the other parent. People who have a trait are sometimes called silent carriers.

### Why is it called a trait?

When a person gets one normal gene from one parent and one abnormal gene from another it is called a **trait**. If both genes are abnormal then it is called a disease.

### Can unidentified hemoglobin trait ever turn into a disease?

Never. Your baby's hemoglobin gene will not change. It remains the same for life.



### If unidentified hemoglobin trait is not a problem why was my baby tested?

In Utah new babies are tested for certain diseases. Your baby was tested to make sure he/she did NOT have a hemoglobin disease.